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Lake Michigan College receives \$3.5 million in state funding

Proos and Jelinek say bill will enhance education, technology

LANSING - State Sen. Ron Jelinek and state Rep. John Proos today praised approval of a bill designating \$3.5 million in state funding to Lake Michigan College for infrastructure improvements to enhance education and technology for the college's science, engineering and math programs. The state is funding half of the \$7 million project.

Jelinek, Senate Appropriations Chair-elect, and Proos, vice chair of the House Energy Technology Committee, say the funding is essential in positioning Lake Michigan College as a major educational provider in southwest Michigan.

"These campus improvements are essential to Lake Michigan College offering the best educational programs that the citizens of southwestern Michigan need and deserve," Jelinek said. "Lake Michigan College has plans to meet present and future student needs in the best manner possible. These improvements are essential to enact those plans."

The college applied for the funding to enhance its bio-medical, health science/nursing and science labs to advance teaching and curriculum standards. In addition, safety components are outdated and in need of renovation.

State funding also will go to the Napier Academic Building, which is more than 40 years old and needs improvements to maintain a safe and healthy environment for its students.

The college plans to not only make infrastructure changes, but construct a learning laboratory to facilitate the academic necessities of students. The lawmakers agree with the college that this new laboratory will make it more diverse and attract more students entering the science and medical fields to the southwest region of the state.

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“The impact this funding will have on the future growth of Lake Michigan College will revolutionize the emerging technologies and programs offered to its students,” said Proos, R-St. Joseph. “A 40-year-old facility is not up to the standards our students need to have the best educational experience they need to progress in their career development. This funding will provide more opportunities for our students.”

Lake Michigan College’s enrollment has increased each semester since 1994 and is projected to increase another 12 percent by 2012. College officials and educators say enrollment growth is an essential reason for implementing infrastructure enhancements.

“This is great news for Lake Michigan College as it represents a new beginning for us to redesign the college and create an educational opportunity to train students in the arena of emerging technologies,” said Dr. Randall Miller, president of Lake Michigan College. “The new technologies in our medical and science industries across the country have set the standard for advances in our facilities and laboratories to help our students be competitive in a global market. This funding comes at a time when infrastructure improvements are essential to the progression of the college and southwest Michigan.”

Senate Bill 1081 now goes to the governor for further consideration.

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